

ANDY BESHEAR
GOVERNOR




GERINA D. WHETHERS
SECRETARY

501 HIGH STREET, 3RD FLOOR
FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40601
PHONE: (502) 564-7571
FAX (502) 564-1823
[HTTPS://PERSONNEL.KY.GOV](https://personnel.ky.gov)

MEMORANDUM

PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM 20-06

TO: Cabinet Secretaries
Constitutional Officers
Agency Heads
HR Administrators

FROM: Gerina D. Whethers, Secretary 

DATE: May 8, 2020

RE: **COVID-19 Mask Policy, Effective May 18, 2020**

On March 6, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order 2020-215 declaring a state of emergency regarding COVID-19, a respiratory disease than can result in serious illness or death. As we transition from “Healthy at Home” to “Healthy at Work,” the Commonwealth of Kentucky remains committed to limiting the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring the health and safety of our state employees. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), whose guidance the Commonwealth has continually followed, has now published guidelines recommending all persons wear cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Wearing a facemask greatly decreases the likelihood that an individual would transmit this virus to other people, if he/she has become infected with the coronavirus and is not yet symptomatic, as there could still be a threat to the workforce. Accordingly, employees will be required to wear a mask when present in Executive Branch buildings/offices and in state vehicles, where another employee is present. This policy will be continually monitored, re-evaluated, and revised, if necessary.

Employees must continue to practice social distancing. Employees will also continue to be required to self-monitor for symptoms concerning COVID-19 infection at the beginning of every shift. If an employee feels as though he or she is displaying symptoms related to the virus, the employee must notify his or her supervisor.

Purpose:

This policy will serve to protect employees and visitors from any individual who have become infected with coronavirus but do not yet demonstrate symptoms of the illness.

This policy applies to employees categorized as “low exposure risk” employees by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Low exposure risk employees are defined by OSHA as employees whose jobs do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 nor require frequent close contact with (i.e., within six feet of) the general public. To the extent that agencies have medium, high, or very high exposure risk jobs at issue and do not already have OSHA compliant mask policies in place, please consult with your agency legal staff to determine the applicability of any additional policy provisions.

To be successful, this new approach will require support from all of us across the enterprise and require the following:

- Strict adherence to long-term use/reuse of masks
- Adherence to hand hygiene
- Proper mask use and hygiene including wearing the mask as directed to cover the mouth and nose

Agencies:

Agencies will be required to provide two (2) cloth masks to employees and contractors. However, employees are permitted to wear their own cloth masks, provided they cover their mouths and noses.

The Kentucky Division of Emergency Management will be responsible for providing masks to agencies. Masks can be ordered at <https://tinyurl.com/kygovtpperequest>.

Employees:

- Employees working in settings *where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain*, must wear either a personal or employer-provided cloth mask while in an Executive Branch office or state vehicle with other passengers.
- All personnel should wear a mask when walking through common areas such as hallways.
- Employees who can safely practice social distancing in their office or work location may remove their masks.
- Face-to-face meetings should be avoided or limited. In the event that face-to-face interaction occurs, individuals are required to wear a mask.
- Entities must, to the greatest extent practicable, restrict common areas such as lobbies, waiting rooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, and concession areas to maximize social distancing and reduce congregating.
- Masks will be required to be worn during an employee’s scheduled work hours while performing job duties on or off the work premises. In the event that the mask becomes visibly soiled, saturated, or damaged while working, a new mask must be obtained.
- Ideally, personal and employer-provided cloth masks should be washed each day after use. It is important that a fabric mask is completely dry before wearing it, as its ability to capture

particles is diminished when wet.

- Employees may submit accommodation requests to the agency Human Resources (HR) office for consideration if the employee is unable to wear a mask because of an underlying medical condition.

Visitors: Agencies may request that visitors wear a mask when entering Executive Branch buildings/offices. If a visitor chooses not to wear a mask, they will still be permitted to enter the building/office. If a visitor does not have a mask upon arrival, an agency may provide a mask to the individual.

Conservation of Masks:

Conservation of masks is essential. We have no way to predict how long this pandemic will affect us. In an effort to ensure masks continue to be available to employees and visitors, we must make all efforts to conserve our supply.

Employees who do not comply with this policy may be removed from Executive Branch buildings/offices and may be subject to corrective or disciplinary action.

Employee correspondence, to include training on the appropriate handling and use of the masks, will be provided to employees in a separate communication.

Any questions related to this policy should be directed to Commissioner Mary Elizabeth Bailey, Commissioner, Personnel Cabinet, Department of Human Resources Administration at 502-564-6619 or MaryE.Bailey@ky.gov.